

Message Text

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PAGE 01 THESSA 00120 221025Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 HA-05 PM-05 L-03 NSC-05 CIAE-00
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R 191215Z MAY 78
FM AMCONSUL THESSALONIKI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2919
INFO AMEMBASSY ATHENS
AMEMBASSY ANKARA
AMEMBASSY NICOSIA
AMCONSUL ISTANBUL

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE THESSALONIKI 0120

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINS, SGEN, GR, TU
SUBJECT: MUSLIMS PROTEST LAND EXPROPRIATION IN KOMOTINI

1. ACCORDING TO THE PRESS A GROUP OF MUSLIMS RECENTLY MARCHED THROUGH KOMOTINI, ONE OF THE NOMARCHY CAPITALS IN WESTERN THRACE, TO PROTEST THE EXPROPRIATION BY GOG OF LAND HOLDINGS. THE REASON FOR THE GOG INITIATIVE IS TO CREATE A KOMOTINI BRANCH OF THE UNIVERSITY OF THRACE. THE PRESS REPORTS THAT LAND BELONGING TO CHRISTIANS IS ALSO BEING TAKEN OVER BUT THE LATTER DID NOT PARTICIPATE IN THE MARCH. THE DEMONSTRATION STARTED AFTER COURT HEARINGS WHICH WERE HELD TO DETERMINE THE AMOUNT OF COMPENSATION TO BE PAID THE OWNERS OF THE EXPROPRIATED LAND. THE MOST NOTEWORTHY FEATURE OF THE MARCH, WHICH WAS LED BY ONE OF THE TWO MUSLIM DEPUTIES IN THE GREEK PARLIAMENT, WAS THAT IT ENDED IN FRONT OF THE TURKISH CONSULATE GENERAL IN KOMOTINI.

2. COMMENT: THE TURKISH CONSUL GENERAL IN THESSALONIKI TOLD US THAT HIS COLLEAGUE IN KOMOTINI HAD NOT AS YET
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SENT HIM A REPORT OF THE INCIDENT BUT THAT HE EXPECTED TO RECEIVE ONE SHORTLY. OF ALL THE CHARGES LEVIED REGARDING ALLEGED DISCRIMINATORY TREATMENT OF THE MUSLIM COMMUNITY IN WESTERN THRACE, THE LACK OF CIVIL SERVICE JOBS, DIFFICULTY IN OBTAINING PASSPORTS, DRIVERS' LICENSES, BUILDING PERMITS, DIFFICULTIES FOR LANGUAGE INSTRUCTORS FROM TURKEY, THE ISSUE THAT STIRS THE

STRONGEST REACTION IS THE LAND QUESTION. MUSLIMS CLAIM
THEY ARE UNABLE TO BUY NEW LAND OR SELL THEIR LAND TO
ANOTHER MUSLIM. GOG OFFICIALS VEHEMENTLY DENY THIS AND CITE
EXAMPLES TO THE CONTRARY. THE TRUTH PROBABLY LIES SOMEWHERE
BETWEEN THESE CLAIMS, WITH TURKISH-SPEAKING CITIZENS
EXPERIENCING EVEN GREATER DELAYS AND FRUSTRATIONS IN
DEALING WITH THE GREEK BUREAUCRACY THAN DOES THE AVERAGE
GREEK CITIZEN. ZACHARY

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